

ANNUAL ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE

COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

Chrestomathic Society,

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON,

*February 27, 1874,*

BY

REV. JAMES W. MILES.

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

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CHARLESTON :  
WALKER, EVANS & COGSWELL, PRINTERS  
Nos. 3 Broad and 109 East Bay Streets.  
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## THE DESTINY OF HUMANITY.

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When there is so much that is sad in the reminiscences of the past, and so much that is gloomy and uncertain in the anticipations of the immediate future, it may not be unwelcome, upon the present occasion, to bury the past, and, instead of harassing contemplation of what lies immediately before us, to direct our reflections to the future Destiny of Humanity. The Destiny of Humanity! What human heart does not throb at those solemn words?

I would not suggest this as an excuse for shutting our eyes to the duties of the present; but there are two prominent points of view from which the subject may be regarded, which, according as the one or the other is adopted, may, by a reflex action, arrest and paralyze, or incite and nerve, our action in the present. For so intimate is the connection between every age and generation, that as we are the product of all the antecedent evolutions of humanity, so our action must exert our influence upon the future; for whether consciously and willingly or not, every generation is a link, acted upon and acting, in the development of the great plan of God respecting our race. And although that plan will doubtless be accomplished in the course of ages, yet within the mysterious circle of our free agency, we may contribute to its retardation, or to its more speedy advancement.

I have said that there are two prominent points of view from which the future Destiny of Humanity may be regarded. The one is, that man has already nearly fulfilled the ends of his existence—has shown what his imperfect and ever-sinning nature can accomplish—and that it only remains for God to interpose directly, and to close the tragic drama of man's wilfulness and folly.

In support of this view, it may be urged that man has had an abundant probation; that he has ever shown the same characteristics, in every age, of a corrupt nature; that for nations, history is written in vain, and that they ever repeat the same weaknesses and aberrations; that Christianity has given sufficient lessons to an unheedful world, and that having garnered in the harvest of faithful individuals, it only remains to stop the ever-recurring cycle of national errors and failures, by the immediate interposition of God, introducing a miraculous millenium, and consummating the destiny of humanity. As to the speedy introduction of a miraculous millenium, I will only say that it seems to me a notion based upon a most uncritical interpretation of Scripture, and seems, furthermore, to violate a sound and essential canon, namely, not to introduce superfluous miraculous interpositions; for if the existing laws of Providence are competent to accomplish what is involved in the Idea of Humanity, we cannot suppose the Deity feebly resorting to expedients, in order to secure the operation and effect of what His own laws, by the steady, natural evolution of their intrinsic power, should accomplish. Were it generally believed, however, that a miraculous millenium is on the point of being introduced, such a belief, from the very nature of man, would tend to paralyze his exertions in reference to the future earthly destiny of his race, and would leave the Idea of Humanity unaccomplished as to what it plainly involves. If it be assumed that the Idea of Humanity was not to be accomplished further, and was to be cut short in its development by such a miraculous intervention, I can only reply that, even granting that such an intervention may at some time occur, it is yet unreasonable to conceive that it will occur otherwise than in accordance with what the Idea of Humanity involves, and, therefore, not speedily, because that Idea is not yet fully evolved, and no reason can be alleged why the Ideas of God should not attain their full evolution and realization. This thought I will endeavor to bring out more fully as I proceed; and it leads me, naturally, to state the other point of view from which the future

Destiny of Humanity may be regarded. This is, that man has not accomplished all of which he is capable; that we can conceive yet higher development of his capacities; that notwithstanding all the apparent stagnations and retrogressions of humanity, there has been, though a slow, yet a steady progress; and, therefore, that there is reason to expect and hope for a future, however distant, and however gradual the approach towards it, of higher attainment in Morals, Politics, Religion—in short, of progress in all that is involved in human capacities. This proposition I shall endeavor—with what inadequate ability no one can be so conscious as myself—to elucidate and establish. The apology for my temerity in venturing upon the subject must be found in its intrinsic interest and suitability to the present time.

Among the reasons which might be presented in support of the proposition, there is one which strikes my own mind with peculiar force. It is this: The Ideas or Thoughts of God must be efficient; they cannot be imperfect, and must, therefore, be realized. With the Divine Mind to think must be identical with the realization of thought. If it be urged, however, that we can conceive the Divine Mind as embracing all possible thoughts and ideas, but selecting only certain ones for realization, in accordance with a chosen plan, this would not affect the position that the Ideas so selected must still be fully realized, and that we have no ground for supposing that the Deity would select an Idea for expression in actual existence, which He would arrest or render abortive. Even if every thought of the Divine Mind is not actually realized in the Universe; is it not reasonable to believe that, having the power of selection, He would choose such as He intended to be fully accomplished? Now, the Thoughts or Ideas of the Divine Mind are expressed to us in the phenomena of the Universe; and when we see there an Idea introduced into actual existence, what ground have we for supposing that it is not to be fully realized? Is it not rather more reasonable to believe that, as a Divine Idea put into actual expression, it must necessarily evolve

itself completely? It is no objection to this that we see imperfect individuals in large classes of phenomena, where the Idea under which they are embraced seems frustrated or not accomplished; for these apparent exceptions are themselves the results of laws becoming realized, and are included in the comprehensive plan which is in process of evolution through the phenomena of the Universe. If, then, it is not reasonable to conceive the Ideas of the Divine Mind as imperfect—if it is most reasonable to conceive that when those Ideas are put into actual expression they will have their full realization—then it is also reasonable to expect a still higher destiny for Humanity, because all has not yet been realized, which even our finite minds can perceive to be involved in the Idea. The Idea of Humanity is a very complex one, and may embrace far more, in the Divine Mind, than we can even imagine; we cannot anticipate in speculation all which God designs Humanity to accomplish; but we can perceive very clearly that there are capacities in Man which have not yet reached that point of development conceivable by us; and it is hard to believe that God has actualized the Idea of Humanity in history, without the design of fully developing it. That the development of a part of the Idea is only to be expected and accomplished in a future life may be admitted; but Man has not fulfilled all of which he is capable upon earth, and without the accomplishment of which, the Idea of Humanity would be mutilated and abortive. The *perfect development of the Idea of Humanity* must not be confounded with the *development of a perfect Humanity*. There can be but One Perfect Being in the Universe; and while endeavoring to set forth the ground of my hopes for Man in the future, I am no visionary optimist looking for perfection in a finite creature. But when I speak of the perfect or complete development of the Idea of Humanity, I mean, of course, the accomplishment of all which, from the nature and conditions of the case, is involved in the conception of Man. I am not dreaming, therefore, that Man can be perfect, but am urging that God will completely fulfil what the conception of such a creature as man admits and involves.

The next step, therefore, will be to consider what is involved in the Idea of Man or Humanity. This I would not have the presumption to pretend to treat exhaustively, but there are some salient points which are plain to every comprehension. I presume it will not be denied that the Idea of Man is that of a creature capable of Social, Political and Religious development. To what extent is not now the question; but if I may fairly assume that such are his capabilities, I may surely proceed to inquire how far he has developed them. To do this would, it is true, require volumes comprising and reviewing all past history; but as my hearers are, doubtless, to a certain extent, familiar with the chief facts, I trust there will be no presumption in undertaking to condense those facts into the following very brief deductions.

In estimating what Humanity has accomplished, it must be borne in mind that Humanity has developed itself through various Races, possessing respectively different capacities and missions. It is quite unimportant to our purpose to inquire how those differences arose; we must take them as facts given in the History of Man.

And here I will take leave, in passing, to enter my protest against a certain narrow view of history which is even at this day still held by some, who have a vague notion that the history of the world is in some way subject to the general direction of Providence, but who, nevertheless, seem to regard the progress of the Christian Religion, and the matter of individual salvation, as almost exclusively the object of God's designs and providential relations with respect to Man; while everything lying beyond this sphere comes, almost unconsciously, to be regarded as profane, and thus whole centuries of history, and vast careers of mighty nations, are excluded from serious consideration as an insignificant phantasmagoria of worthless Paganism. There is something painfully profane in this slighting of God's Providence in the history of the world. Indeed, there is something essentially heathenish in the notion which seems to confine His regards and designs to the limited

portions of history contained in the sacred scriptures and the Christian Church, making Him a kind of national or local Deity, and taking no account of His relations to the empires and millions of human beings, whose course He guided, and to whose national existence He assigned its appointed part in the history of the world. It is almost a half-infidel, certainly a thoroughly base conception of Christianity, which seems to think, that the honor and elevation of this religion require the whole world, outside of the old Jewish and the Christian, to be traduced, blackened, condemned, and despised, as if it were the work of the devil, and not a part of the blessed God's own creation, ordered and designed by the laws of His own Providence. This gross dualism, as if Paganism and evil were forces against which God had to contend by opposing expedients, is foreign to the whole spirit of Christianity. If there be *one* God, *all* the laws of the Universe must be the result of His Thought and Plan. In that plan is involved, it is true, a *moral* being—man—who, as such, is responsible, and, therefore, possessed of free agency, and of the capacity, consequently, of choosing good or evil; but Man, in the Plan of God, as actualized in the Universe, has various phases of a Divine Idea to manifest; and, therefore, while personally responsible according to the conditions in which he is placed, he is everywhere equally the thought and care of God, however diverse may be the stages of Humanity which he is appointed to exhibit in the development of that Divine Thought or Idea.

We find, then, that while *all* men are social, moral, political and religious creatures, there are yet two grand divisions of the Human Family, exhibiting these traits in marked difference of degree and character. One division—the lower—comprehends all the unhistorical races—that is, the races who have developed no literature, and, therefore, have left no recorded history; and although among these races there have been various grades of development—from the embruted native of Australia to the organized empire of the Peruvian Incas—yet they all stand upon a lower level than the

other division, which comprehends the historical races, who have evolved the traits mentioned in a higher degree, and have left their recorded impress upon the history of the world. The lower division, then, we may eliminate from the problem immediately before us. They have shown that there is a certain unity of nature in man, and here we may dismiss them. For, although it has been seriously disputed, yet I have never seen it disproved, that we may regard as a sound canon of historical criticism the maxim that no people originally savage have ever developed from within a civilization, and, conversely, that no people who have spontaneously developed a civilization, have ever been found in a primitive savage condition, rude as may have been their earlier social state. But in the higher division of the Human Family—the historical races—there is also a marked difference in the various grades of their development. Some, like the Chinese, have reached a certain point and become stationary. Some, like the ancient Hindoo, have gone yet further, and left their marvellous Sanskrit language, as a key to the phenomena of the vast families of languages which spread from India to Iceland. Some, like Greece and Rome, have moulded the intellectual and juristic culture of the whole Western civilized world. Some, like the Gothic and Germanic nations, have introduced new elements of development and life into the old, decaying civilization. Some, like the Semites, have been the cradle and depositories of certain peculiar and especial religious manifestations. And so on—each race has fulfilled its own mission, all contributing to the unfolding of the complex and multiform Idea of Humanity. Sprung from, and rooted in, all the past as the present is, it is no visionary speculation that many an oriental notion, even principles derived originally from Buddhism, should be influencing present modes of thought and traditional belief, although the traces of the channels by which those oriental elements flowed down to us have become lost, and we are unconscious of the real sources of notions which have become intimately commingled with popular beliefs. Who can trace the sub-

tle influences upon theological and philosophical speculation of the commingling of oriental and occidental elements in Alexandria? Taking, then, the totality of the different manifestations of the historical races, as the exponent of the highest capacities of humanity, what great moments of progress can we trace?

Before proceeding to state these, it is necessary for their clearer appreciation, to state, first, the great Law of Periodicity by which the evolutions of humanity are regulated. Humanity neither flows on in a direct, continuous course, like the unbroken stream of a perfectly straight river, nor does it revolve upon itself, like a stationary wheel, ever repeating the same cycles. Nothing is repeated in nature. No age is identical with another. But the evolution of humanity in history proceeds, if I may use the expression, by a cycloidal movement; or, in other words, by recurring analogous periods of ascent and descent. Each ascent has its corresponding apparent retrogression, again rising and descending in parallel and analogous, but not identical revolutions, while the general movement is still onward, is a real progress. When Confucius promulgated his moral system, pantheistic as it was, and based upon a false estimate of human nature, it was, nevertheless, a great advance upon the old degrading fetishism and idolatry. When Zoroaster reformed, and spiritualised, by nobler conceptions of the relation of the responsible soul to good and evil, the corrupt and torpid formalism which surrounded him, he originated a great movement in the history of his race. When Saky-a-Muni founded what we know as Buddhism, he elevated many a soul above the paralyzing degradation to which Brahmanism had sunk from what was once a purer and simpler creed. There is something affecting in the childlike simplicity of some of the earlier hymns of the Vedas; and as Brahmanism was a descending movement, so Buddhism, although now corrupt, was the ascending phase. When Mohammed, with an analogous and kindred spirit to that which animated the august Hebrew prophets, believed himself commissioned by God to proclaim the Divine Unity, he made

an immense step beyond the senseless idolatry of his people. An honest, earnest, useful enthusiast and reformer at the beginning of his career, if, under the pressure of circumstances which he could not control, he was, at the last, led to countenance or feign impositions which he knew to be such, it must be borne in mind that according to his enlightenment, (or want of enlightenment,) he very naturally regarded the means as justified by the good end which was aimed at, and in this stands upon the same footing with some of the great Fathers of the Church, who, although they expressly sanctioned "pious frauds," are, nevertheless, adorned with the title of Saints. Do not understand me as apologizing for either Mohammed's conscious impositions, or the pious frauds of Christian Fathers; but I confess that I have sometimes been disgusted with the flippant ignorance which, with no discrimination or qualification, brands sweepingly as a mere "impostor" a man of great soul, of earnest faith, and a remarkable instrument in the hand of Providence for substituting One God in place of a stupid idolatry, and for scourging the faithless Christian peoples, who had corrupted their heaven-given religion into a system of superstitions which sank it far below the level of the religion of the Arabian Reformer.

Now, it is true, that Confucius' system has not been preserved in the spirit of its author; that Zoroaster's system became corrupted, as did Buddhism and Mohammedanism; but, nevertheless, they were great moments of progress—ascending nodes in the cycloidal evolution of Humanity, and, if the retrogressions have not been followed by corresponding new ascents within those respective systems themselves, yet, taking the totality of Human development, we find in other races or portions of Humanity analogous movements and an undoubted advance in evolution. But sometimes these cycloidal movements in the different phases of Humanity do not coincide, and thus there may appear for the time to be no progress; as, for example, the religious and political movement may not be passing through analogous phases at the same time; Christianity was

insensibly and silently advancing, when the political world was sinking to the degradation of imperial misrule. So, too, a people may have made great advances in physical science, in inventions, and material prosperity, and luxury, and yet be upon a comparatively low step of moral culture and refinement. But to revert to the general law: if the stifling despotisms of the East were a downward curve in the revolution of History, from the patriarchal rule, the free governments of Greece were an ascending node of Humanity, far in advance of Eastern despotisms. If the descent, again, from Roman freedom to Imperial despotism was parallel and analogous to the descent from patriarchal rule to oriental despotism, it was yet not identical; and the worst period of Roman Imperialism was better than the monstrous slavery of an Eastern Empire. If the ascent from barbarism to the development of modern Europe, and the constitutional liberty of England, was parallel and analogous to the emergence of Greece from barbarism to monarchy, and to the republican institutions of the free Greek States, it was yet not identical; and the ideas we can now form of constitutional liberty are an immense advance upon anything achieved by Greece. What her philosophers, in speculative vision, saw as a real *politeia*, (as they called it, *par excellence*,) was never realized in any Grecian State: it had its first approximative realization in the growth of the British Constitution. The sensual degradation of woman in the later East, was a descent from the patriarchal conception of her position; but the ascending phase was manifested in woman's treatment in Greece, and in the dignity of the Roman matron; which, however inadequate an expression of what woman can and ought to be, was, nevertheless, an incalculable advance beyond the oriental slavish conception of her social relations. But, still, how immensely beyond even the Roman matron's position is that which modern civilization accords to woman.

The Law of Periodicity is strikingly manifested in the history of the human mind. As we have in ancient times, Philosophy, proceeding from the sanctuaries—

then making independent attempts—forming speculative systems of physics, i. e., of the philosophy of nature—then proceeding to ideal and moral speculation, seeming to exhaust the cycle of dogmatic systems, and culminating in scepticism, which again produced a reaction; so we find precisely parallel and analogous, but not identical, phases in modern thought, from scholasticism, on through the revival of letters and the accompanying speculations, down through the various systems of Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, &c. But it is unnecessary to pursue these analogies; only two brief observations need here be made.

First. The evolutions of Humanity present aberrations and conflicts, for it is the law of progress that truth and advance should be made by successive contests with error and opposition. Secondly. Each successive apparent retrogression or downward course, is made from an ascending node which is in advance of the preceding one, and this is itself a prophecy, as it were, of another ascending and progressive movement to follow. If the deductions I have stated as drawn from history, be admitted to be well grounded, I thence draw the following support and confirmation of the proposition which I undertook to elucidate;—namely, that as there has been in the successive phases of the evolution of Humanity, notwithstanding the conflicts and descending nodes, yet, a real progress; and as that progress has not completely fulfilled all of which man has shown himself capable, yet it is a legitimate induction that the law of Periodical Evolution will continue to operate in the future, analogously to its operation in the past; and that, therefore, we may expect a continuous progress in the unfolding of Humanity, as long as the existence of Man is continued upon the earth. But there is no valid reason for supposing that that existence is to be terminated before man shall have developed, as far as belongs to his earthly sphere, what is involved in his capacities. I speak, of course, of the totality of Humanity—the Idea of Man. That *individuals* should be cut off in mid-career, does not affect the evolution of the Idea of *Humanity*. Many an individual thread

may be broken in the weaving of the web ; the fabric, nevertheless, proceeds steadily to its full realization. Arguing, then, from the analogy of the past, what may we legitimately anticipate for the future ? And here, in passing, I will endeavor to meet, by a few brief observations, what may be a ground of discouragement if not of objection. Looking *only* at the *present* state of the world, hope may well grow dim. It has ever been so in analogous periods ; for we are now passing through one of those descending curves which have always, however, been transition periods of conflict and seeming confusion, preparatory to another ascent and progressive movement. Could anything have seemed more hopeless than the degradation of the world, when the new and vigorous elements were introduced, out of which sprang modern Europe ? Could anything have seemed more desperate for intellectual and moral freedom, than the condition of Europe, when the Reformation unfettered springs of thought and life that have been so mighty and fruitful ? I, for one, do not deny that the Reformation was the *occasion* of the manifestation of enormous evils ; but every movement which stirs and bears onward in its mighty swell the depths of Humanity, must, in the great conflict, evolve both evil and good ; and without the Reformation, there would have been no *scientific* criticism, philosophy, or philology ; no constitutional England ; no republican America. Whatever may have been the faults or defects of the old Constitution of the original United States, it *was* republican—it *was* a vision of hope for the nations. But in the past every descending phase prophesied a following progress, and, therefore, I believe that the present state of the world is a transitional preparation for something higher and nobler. God forbid that I should ever so far lose faith in the efficiency of the Divine Ideas—of Divine Law—in a word, of Providence, as to be bereft of this sustaining ennobling, and consoling belief. Let us not fall into the shallow error of supposing that our present turbid transitional state, is a measure of the future, and that what we can see and dogmatise upon is quite as far as

any subsequent age can attain. Surely the constitutional monarchies of the continent of Europe, imperfect as they must be confessed to be, are yet an advance towards national liberty, beyond the old irresponsible despotisms. It is incredible, and scarcely possible that any government in France will ever repeat the unutterable abominations, which laid the train for the justly retributive explosion of the first revolution. And England is, constitutionally, yet further in advance of any continental State. So, too, on this continent, out of the necessary discipline of democratic, consolidated despotism, will emerge constitutional States, in which rational liberty will be secured by the guaranties of the people's sense of mutual right and justice. Can we suppose that the people of this continent will tamely acquiesce in an ultimate despotism? Ground down and despoiled as may be some parts of the country by unscrupulous party despotism, the time will come when justice and the rational liberty of constitutional States, will emerge from the chaos of a rapacious and selfish radicalism and mere democracy, which would sacrifice every interest to the irresponsible power of a party majority, and would travestie every constitutional guarantee, into the mockery of the arbitrary enactments of the party in power. This is not to be the destiny of our country; this is not to be the tyranny to which this continent is to submit, with its teeming West, and its growing free States upon the Pacific coast. And in Europe, we see already significant pulsations in England, and upon the continent deep murmurs as of the coming earthquake, when through strife and up-heaving of error and false conservatism, there will emerge—fighting itself forth—larger and more catholic truth in Religion, Morals and Politics.

I repeat, then, the question: What may we, from the analogy of the past, legitimately anticipate for the future? I would answer, that it is no extravagance to expect an advance as far beyond our present phase as we are beyond what preceded the existing development of science, religion, social relations and politics. The highest point which man can reach will, it is true, be

only the evolution of the capacities of a *finite*, not an absolutely perfect, creature; but *that* evolution is involved in the Divine Idea of Humanity, and must be realized if the Divine Ideas actually expressed in the Universe be efficient. If this be so, there are yet grand phases through which Humanity must pass, notwithstanding the necessary aberrations and conflicts which must attend the evolution. No one doubts the progress in science; few can deny the amelioration of social relations and conditions; but how imperfect are these as yet! Is there to be no further enlightenment of the ignorant? Are the squalid, the abject, the degraded, the embruted, who exist, alas! even in the very midst of the most cultured nations, to be no further reached and helped and elevated by Christian philanthropy and duty? And Christianity itself, is it to be no further purified from the encrustations of schools and sects, which still obscure its glorious lineaments and its divine simplicity? Has man been enabled by the good God to conceive of rational liberty, only to be fooled with an illusive dream, or by a mocking demon? God forgive the supposition of such deadly issues? No! such is not the Destiny of Humanity which all the past prophecies. In each transition epoch there is a process going on, like the mysterious transformation of the chrysalis, when those who live in the period cannot trace and grasp in all their relations the complicated operations, which, working deeply and secretly in the bosom of civilization, are preparing for a higher evolution. And seeing what thoughts God has already wrought out, in progressive development, through Humanity, I look in the future for a period, not only of progress for the higher races, but when the leading races which represent the highest capacities of Man will educate and impart to the inferior races whatever they are capable of receiving for the full discharge of their functions as members of Humanity, in that sphere which Providence has allotted to them. And when the law of the relation of races is understood and acted upon, in the spirit of Charity and Justice, then only can be evolved a rational human fraternity, in which

each people, freely developing itself within its appropriate sphere, neither encroaching upon others nor being encroached upon, will contribute to the unfolding of Humanity as a brotherhood, in subordination to the laws of duty, and of the relations of place and diverse capacities. The maxim about "the greatest good of the greatest number," is as pernicious in Morals as it is absurd in Philosophy, and contrary to the spirit of Justice. What kind of physical constitution would that be, in which some organs were to be repressed in the discharge of their appropriate functions, upon the alleged ground of the benefit of the majority of the other organs? The result would be abnormal and diseased. The very idea of a perfectly healthy constitution is that in which no organ is sacrificed for another, but each and all have their full and natural play within the sphere of their several functions; all contributing—(not to the repression of any, but—) to the full development of each—each contributing to the harmonious welfare of the whole.

And it is precisely the same in moral and political organizations, the great problem of which is, not the greatest good of the greatest number, (for if some members are mutilated, there can be no greatest good) but the greatest good of each, and therefore of all; in other words, that to each individual should be secured in his proper sphere, the full development of his individuality, regulated, and therefore elevated, by the supreme law of duty and Christian principle. I do not presume to say that such an ideal will ever be *perfectly* realized upon the earth; but if the past be not the result of chance, if a Divine Providence has presided over the prophetic evolution, then I feel a profound conviction that Humanity is destined to a nearer approximation to the realization of its capacities; that a future age will see in Religion a Christianity, not of the olden Church Fathers, nor of Luther, nor Calvin, nor Cranmer, nor Wesley, but of Christ, the embodiment of Holy Justice and of Divine Love; that a future age will see in polities, a rational liberty, equally removed from the licentiousness of mere democracy, and

the stagnation of despotism, regulated by Law, founded upon Justice, sanctified by Religion, exhibiting self-government in constitutional forms, which secure the rights of the minority and regulate the freedom of the majority ; in short, that a future age will see, Justice, in its largest sense, influencing every phase of human development—Justice!\* It is the most glorious attribute of the Deity himself. It is nothing less than Goodness directed by Wisdom. It is Justice which preserves the existence of harmony in the universal frame which God has established. Her seat is the throne of God ; her dominion is coëxtensive with the empire of the universe ; the wicked tremble before the lightning of her glance ; the oppressed take refuge beneath the shadow of her august sceptre ; and Man, in his feeble capacity and degree, strives to reflect her image, and to ennoble his decisions with the impress of her form. With Mercy and Goodness as her sisters and assessors, she distributes to each created being its appropriate award ; and neither yielding to flattery, nor insensible to pity, she guides in their appointed spheres all orders of the universe, teaching them to quire in eternal harmony around the throne of God.

What relation do we bear to that future evolution of Humanity ? If we look for the earliest condition of civilization, we find it to have been manifested in the East ; it is towards sunrise that we must trace upward the stream of nations. But the civilization of the great Eastern races, while in certain respects presenting a high degree of development, yet was inflexible, defective in the social element, and bound to vast despoticisms. The Phoenicians, who were further West than the Ninevites, exhibited a much freer and more active form of civilization. Still further Westward—after we leave the East entirely—the onward-rolling stream of civilization bursts forth in yet newer, fresher and more glorious founts upon the Grecian soil. Still further Westward, and still later, appears the civilization of the

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\* Cf. the celebrated passage concerning Law, in Hooker's *Eccles. Polit.*

Romans, not higher, in many respects, than that of the Greeks, but infinitely beyond any which had appeared in the East, and which, adopting much of the Grecian culture, spread the elements of civilization wider and deeper than they had ever yet been carried. Still further West arose the next form of civilization under Charlemagne. On the extremest Western border of Europe developed itself the civilization of modern England ; and rolling ever towards sunset, the course of Humanity finds a boundless vista opening before it in America, while nations left behind are passing their meridian, or have already sunk into decay. But there has been no retrogression of the general tendency of the great stream ; that is, civilization has never turned to flow Eastward, and the elements of a new, higher, Christianized civilization, seem destined to be carried ultimately to the East by the still Westward tending path across the Pacific Ocean. This, however, lies in the future, when experience shall have taught the people of this land how to secure rational and constitutional liberty by surer guarantees—when the spirit of Justice and Christianity shall have been more fully developed—when several independent, *real* republics shall, in a bond of amity and mutual assistance, have furthered, in another ascending node, the development of Humanity upon this vast continent. Meantime, what is our duty in the present ? That we are members of an ever progressively unfolding Humanity—an Idea of God evolving itself towards completion—ennobles us in our relations to the races of Man, and furnishes an incentive to the discharge of our duties in the immediate present. The honor and dignity of a country is, to a certain extent, in the keeping of every citizen. The best and truest citizen is the man who is striving to actuate a real and truthful existence, believing that life and its aims and duties are grand and solemn realities, rooted in immovable principles of Truth and Justice. Man's moral life is rooted in that which he loves and believes in, and the citizen who realizes that he is a member of Humanity will so live as to aid, and further, and awaken others to the progress and cause of Truth

and goodness. He will recognize that there is something permanent and eternal beneath all that is transitory and phenomenal—that truth, justice, rectitude and duty are no unstable words, changing their signification with each new relation; but that they are immovable verities, independent of time and place, and in these he knows that his life must be rooted by faith in their reality and enduring power—by love of their eternal nobleness and beauty. This will impart to him an earnestness, a weight of character, a moral dignity and power which the world may, for a time, scorn and ridicule, but which no opposition can render nugatory, and whose influence no lapse of time can quench. The man whose name awakens a higher aspiration, a more earnest thought of life, a more worthy conception of the vocation of Man, in the bosom of any fellow-creature, has better served his country, has more truly, more immortally lived, than the man of whom, whatever his temporal power, however he may have been the demi-god of his petty arena, whatever blazonings flattery may lend his name, we have yet to ask, what difference would it have made to the cause of goodness, truth and the progress of Humanity, if he had never existed at all. Better leave to posterity a name, which, however comparatively obscure, cannot be known without its accompanying noble associations, than many of those names which can give no reply to the demand which Humanity has a right to make—"for what true purpose have you lived?" names, which, it is true, are often in the world's mouth, but which never reach, or move to better aspirations, the great heart of Humanity. If we fold our arms now because times are dark and hard,—if we give ourselves up to indolence, or selfishness, instead of earnest effort, times will never become better for us, but we will reap the bitter harvest to the end.

There is indeed an evil, devilish earnestness, by which some portentous beings have stamped themselves, as in dreadful characters of fire and death, upon the annals of the world. But in the progress of the great Drama of Ages, as Humanity is unfolded at each successive epoch into higher development, such characters will

only stand upon the path of time like blighted marks ; while the men who have lived for Truth, Justice, Rectitude and Humanity, are those who will gather around their memories the glorious halo of their fellow-creatures' gratitude and admiration. Let us, then, deriving hope from the history of the past, submitting to the providence of the present, with manly and Christian faith in the future, endeavor so to live and act, that, whether our sphere be public or private, distinguished or obscure—whether our actions and services be recognized or neglected, we may yet, in our own bosoms, possess the ennobling and sustaining consciousness, that, within the sphere of our free-agency and responsibility, we have honestly and justly endeavored to do our duty as members of that Humanity which lives and moves and has its being in God.

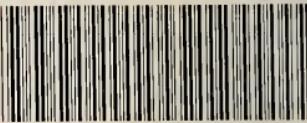








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